

Appln. No. 10/625,252
Amendment dated February 14, 2007
Reply to Office Action mailed November 14, 2006

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of claims (deleted text being struck through and added text being underlined):

1. (Currently Amended) A method for providing one or more real-time marketing opportunities to third parties during a sales transaction between a customer and a seller for purchasing a product, the real-time marketing opportunity being offered by the seller, the method comprising:

establishing a communication connection between the seller and the third parties;

determining an occurrence of the sales transaction;

issuing , by the seller during the occurrence of the sales transaction, an alert over the established connection to the third parties that the sales transaction is in progress and a bidding process is open for soliciting bids on at least one of the one or more real-time marketing opportunities;

establishing a time duration for the bidding process associated with the at least one real-time marketing opportunity;

receiving , by the seller during the occurrence of the sales transaction, one or more bids from one or more of the third parties for the at least one real-time marketing opportunity; and

determining a winning bid for each of the one or more real-time marketing opportunities included in the bidding process based on the one or more bids raised.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps step of:

~~issuing an end-of-bidding alert to the one or more third parties that a winning bid has been received; and~~

completing the transaction between the seller and the customer for the product including the at least one marketing opportunity after the step of determining the winning bid.

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3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more real-time marketing opportunities include an opportunity to provide one or more of: a peripheral, a promotion, a download, and an offer, to be included in the transaction for the purchase of the product.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of establishing a communication connection further includes:

offering general information associated with the one or more real-time marketing opportunities on an Internet site associated with the seller, and

allowing the third parties to establish a communication connection with the seller over the Internet site.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of establishing a communication connection further includes:

offering general information associated with the one or more real-time marketing opportunities via a telephone conversation with the seller; and

allowing the third parties to establish a communication connection with the seller over the Internet site.

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7. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for providing one or more real-time marketing opportunities to third parties during a sales transaction between a customer and a seller for purchasing a product, the real-time marketing opportunity being offered by the seller, the apparatus comprising:

a network; and

a processor coupled to the network, the processor being configured to:

establish a communication connection between the seller and the third parties over the network;

determine an occurrence of the sales transaction;

issue, by the seller during the occurrence of the sales transaction, an alert over the established connection to the third parties that the sales transaction is in progress and a bidding process is open for bidding on at least one of the one or more real-time marketing opportunities;

establish a time duration for the bidding process associated with the at least one real-time marketing opportunity;

receive , by the seller during the occurrence of the sales transaction, one or more bids from one or more third parties for the at least one real-time marketing opportunity; and

~~determining~~ determine a winning bid for each of the one or more real-time marketing opportunities included in the bidding process based on the one or more bids raised.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the processor is further configured to:

~~issue an end-of-bidding alert to the one or more third parties that a winning bid has been received; and~~

complete the transaction between the seller and the customer for the product including the at least one marketing opportunity after the step to determine the winning bid.

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9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the one or more real-time marketing opportunities include an opportunity to provide one or more of a group consisting of a peripheral, a promotion, a download, and an offer, to be included in the transaction for the purchase of the product.

10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8, wherein the one or more real-time marketing opportunities include an opportunity to provide one or more of a group consisting of a peripheral, a promotion, a download, and an offer, to be included in the transaction for the purchase of the product.

11. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the processor in establishing a communication connection is further configured to:

offer general information associated with the one or more real-time marketing opportunities on an Internet site associated with the seller; and

allow the third parties to establish a communication connection with the seller over the Internet site.

12. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the processor in establishing a communication connection is further configured to:

offer general information associated with the one or more real-time marketing opportunities via a telephone conversation with the seller; and

allow the third parties to establish a communication connection with the seller over the Internet site.

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13. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture for providing one or more real-time marketing opportunities to third parties during a sales transaction between a customer and a seller for purchasing a product, the real-time marketing opportunity being offered by the seller, the article of manufacture comprising:

a computer readable medium; and

instructions carried on the computer readable medium, the instructions being readable by a processor, and the instructions causing a processor to:

establish a communication connection between the seller and the third parties over a network;

determine an occurrence of the sales transaction;

issue , by the seller during the occurrence of the sales transaction, an alert over the established connection to the third parties that the sales transaction is in progress and a bidding process is open for bidding on at least one of the one or more real-time marketing opportunities;

establish a time duration for the bidding process associated with the at least one real-time marketing opportunity;

receive , by the seller during the occurrence of the sales transaction, one or more bids from one or more of the third parties for the at least one real-time marketing opportunity and

determining a winning bid for each of the one or more real-time marketing opportunities included in the bidding process based on the one or more bids raised.

14. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 13, wherein the instruction further cause the processor to:

~~issue an end-of-bidding alert to the one or more third parties that a winning bid has been received; and~~

complete the transaction between the seller and the customer for the product including the at least one marketing opportunity after the step of determining the winning bid.

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15. (Original) The article of manufacture of claim 13, wherein the one or more real-time marketing opportunities include an opportunity to provide one or more of a group consisting of a peripheral, a promotion, a download, and an offer, to be included in the transaction for the purchase of the product.

16. (Original) The article of manufacture of claim 14, wherein the one or more real-time marketing opportunities include an opportunity to provide one or more of a group consisting of a peripheral, a promotion, a download, and an offer, to be included in the transaction for the purchase of the product.

17. (Previously Presented) The article of manufacture of claim 13, wherein the instructions in causing the processor to establish a communication connection further cause the processor to:

offer general information associated with the one or more real-time marketing opportunities on an Internet site associated with the seller; and

allow the third parties to establish a communication connection with the seller over the Internet site.

18. (Previously Presented) The article of manufacture of claim 13, wherein the instructions in causing the processor to establish a communication connection further cause the processor to:

offer general information associated with the one or more real-time marketing opportunities via a telephone conversation with the seller; and

allow the third parties to establish a communication connection with the seller over the Internet site.

19. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more real-time marketing opportunities includes an opportunity to provide an offer, and additionally comprising the step of communicating the offer to the customer during the occurrence of the sales transaction.

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20. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more real-time marketing opportunities includes an opportunity to provide a download, and additionally comprising the step of offering the download to the customer during the occurrence of the sales transaction.

21. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more real-time marketing opportunities includes an opportunity to provide a peripheral, and additionally comprising the step of including the peripheral in the sales transaction for the product during the occurrence of the sales transaction.